

NEW BOOKS.

The Latest Book About Asiatic Russia.

The impressions and conclusions of an eyewitness are set forth in the volume entitled "Greater Russia," by Wm. Gerrard (Macmillan). The author has repeatedly visited Russia's Asiatic possessions, and he twice crossed the empire in 1901. It is especially upon Russia's political and commercial position and prospects in the Far East that the book throws light. His observations have convinced Mr. Gerrard that east of Lake Baikal lies Russia's better half, because her subjects in that quarter have been influenced from the west by way of the cosmopolitan settlements that dot the eastern coast of Asia from Yokohama to Singapore. It is east of Lake Baikal that Russia shows herself most jealous of foreigners, and it is precisely of that region that Anglo-Saxons know the least. It was there that our author discovered that Englishmen, however Russophile they may have professed to be, were excluded from privileges readily granted to foreigners of every other nationality—including Americans—except the Japanese, and were rigorously barred from Manchuria, although Russia now pretends to make no claim to that country. Legalized access to Chinese Manchuria having been withheld from Mr. Gerrard, he entered it in disguise. The information thus secured forms the basis of the concluding and most interesting chapters of the present book.

From what our author saw in Chinese Manchuria, he has no doubt that the true aim of Russia's policy in that territory was correctly indicated in a recent issue of the *Norve Vremja*. That newspaper did not hesitate to declare that, after the construction of the Manchurian branch of the Trans-Siberian Railway, she could not afford to play the part of an unconcerned spectator toward the future fate of a line which had cost her many millions of pounds sterling. The *Norve Vremja* went on to say that, if the Manchurian Railway was to further the development of Russian trade, free traffic with the region traversed must be denied to other nations. Mining rights should also be restricted to Russian subjects. Russian industries should also be favored by carrying Russian goods over the Manchurian Railway at a preferential tariff and by admitting them duty free into Chinese Manchuria, through the new Russian port of Dalny on the southeast coast of the Liau-Tung Peninsula. Thus, trade with Manchuria would be diverted from the natural economical channels into Russian channels. Our author warns us that if this policy is carried out, the Chinese customs revenue, which constitutes the main guarantee of China's territorial integrity—for, if she cannot pay her debts with money, she must pay them with land—will be seriously depleted.

Let us see how the plan of diverting foreign trade from Chinese to Russian ports has worked lately. It is well known that Newchwang, which hitherto has been the principal entrepot of Manchuria, is a treaty port, which means that goods imported there should pay the Chinese customs duties collected under the supervision of Sir Robert Hart. In the spring of 1902, however, Russia passed through to Newchwang not only Russian wares, but some thousands of bales of American, Indian and British cotton goods which had been brought into the country duty free by way of Port Arthur. It is obvious that by this act Russia suspended the collection of duties at Chinese treaty ports in order to promote trade in its own ports on the Liau-Tung Peninsula. Should it now prove impossible to continue this practice at Newchwang, owing to the evacuation of that port, Russia will still forward goods duty free from Port Arthur or Dalny to inland towns in Manchuria, whence they will be conveyed to other parts of northern China. It is to be borne in mind, moreover, that goods may enter China by land as well as by sea. Our author directs attention to the fact that Russian goods conveyed by the Siberian Railway do not pay duty on entering Manchuria, for there is no Chinese customs station at the frontier or along the Manchurian branch line. It is pronounced extremely unlikely that Russia will permit Sir Robert Hart to establish a custom house on the Manchurian Railway or within the Russian sphere of influence, which extends to a considerable distance on each side of the iron road. Neither, in his opinion, will the Chinese imperial authorities be permitted to restrict in any way the trade with China which Russia has developed at enormous pecuniary sacrifices.

In their own defence British and American traders will struggle for a share of the Manchurian market thrown open to them by the Russian free ports in the Liau-Tung Peninsula. Especially will this be the case if the Chinese import tariff is raised, as, apparently, it must be if the Pekin Government is forced to pay the indemnity of 450,000,000 taels with the tael converted at the gold value which it possessed when the treaty was signed. That value we may mention has fallen from 74 cents to 52 cents. Now, it is manifest that if British and American traders succeed in gaining access to Manchuria through the Russian ports, the Chinese revenue at Newchwang and elsewhere will be materially lessened, and Dalny will thrive at the expense of the treaty ports. If they fail, the Manchurian market will be barred to Great Britain and the United States. In either event, Russia will win. Germany in Kiao-Chow may be expected, in defence of its own trading interests, to do what Russia is doing in the Liau-Tung Peninsula—that is to say, pass goods into China duty free through the ports which it controls.

The political bearing of such interference with the Chinese customs duties is unmistakable. Should the income now derived by China from her tariff, and applied to the payment of her foreign creditors, be considerably reduced, through Russian free port competition, the necessary revenue will have to be raised in other ways, ways which will impose upon the Powers guaranteeing the integrity of China further interposition in the administration of her internal affairs. Such interposition through spheres of influence would almost inevitably lead to partition.

The book before us is particularly valuable because it discloses the real aim of Russia in the Far East, which is, primarily, to control the foreign trade, not only with Manchuria, but with the whole of Northern China. Political control would ultimately follow. When she acquired Port Arthur and the Liau-Tung Peninsula, she took the first step, and a long step, toward the fulfilment of her aim. That the initial acquisition was made without provoking any protest from Great Britain will probably prove to have been one of the gravest blunders ever committed by the British Foreign Office.

M. W. H.

By Wireless From Mars.

We find it said in a preface to "The Curiosity of a Future Life in Mars: Being the Posthumous Papers of Bradford Torrey Dodd," by L. P. Gratiot (Brentano's), that Mr. Dodd's "scientific ability was undoubtedly remarkable," and it seems to us that this is not at all an overstatement of the case. Mr. Dodd's father, being at the point of death, arranged to send wireless messages to him from whatever place he might be going to. Mr. Dodd waited vainly for a year, and then began to receive mes-

sages from the planet Mars in a wireless station which he and his father had erected in New Zealand. He had about given up hope when the Morse instrument in the station began to click. "Could my ears have deceived me?" Mr. Dodd asks in the posthumous papers. "No! It was running, running, running, intelligible, strong, definite; it seemed to me of almost piercing loudness, although just audible. I bent over, seized my pad, and wrote. The Abyss of Death was bridged."

There could be no doubt in the matter. The elder Mr. Dodd was in Mars and was wireless. His messages began at 10 A. M. on Sept. 23, 1903, and ended at 10 P. M. the same day. It started off: "My son, I am indeed in the red orb of light we have so often looked up to when we were together on earth," and ran on for thirty pages of the posthumous papers. It said among other things that souls from the earth reached Mars in bulb form; that they came all merged together in a copious phosphorescent stream and were received on a high hill in colossal tubs or chambers built for the purpose, where they were duly separated and reindividualized.

After a considerable interval the elder Dodd sent a second message, which was so long that the son faintly when he had finished taking it. The two messages tell a good deal about Mars, and we must consider them satisfactory, though they give no further information concerning the brass grasshoppers used by the cavalry in that planet. Out of the many books about Mars that it has been our privilege to read we remember vividly only these grasshoppers, which had legs as long as the Eiffel Tower and moved with as much alarming speed and terrifying noise as our own devil wagons. We are sorry there is nothing more about the grasshoppers here; but, as we have said, we should be thankful for the posthumous papers.

The Mystery of Sacrilege Farm.

A queer name and likely to be a queer place, the reader will think as he comes to consider the title of Mabel Hart's story, "Sacrilege Farm" (D. Appleton & Co.). The maids waiting to be engaged at the autumn hiring fair at Ryeworth shook their heads with much decision when they were approached by that tall and dinky and forbidding old man, Mr. Sylvester, who wanted a maid for his son's widow, Margaret. Margaret had told him that she knew nothing about him or the story of Sacrilege Farm. After she had bound herself she came across him in a public house, where he sat alone, drinking like a man who drinks for a wage. For he poured from bottle to glass and from the glass down his throat almost without a pause, while another bottle stood at his elbow empty. Having finished the second bottle "he tried to rise, but he had to make three efforts before he got to his feet, when he lurched to the door with as little heed of those who stood before it as if they had been so many three-legged stools. And I noticed," says Margaret, "that even the tipsiest maid was for him. But as for me, I shrank back against the wall, holding my breath for fear, while he stumbled past me into the twilight. For, when he turned, I had seen his face, white even in the heat of that room, and the eyes in it like live coals."

The reader will think that life at Sacrilege Farm was likely to be uncanny; and the impression will not be weakened by the account of Margaret's meeting with John Pounce, the hired man at the farm, who, when she was presented to him, "grunted, and, without lifting his heavy eyes to Margaret's face, struck the nearest cow with his open hand upon the flank, and, growing to his pitch-eyed dog to stay without, followed after her into the misty shed."

We shall leave the reader to find out for himself what may have been the reasonableness of the innuendoes of Mrs. Janaway and others regarding the death of Mr. Sylvester's son, Ambrose, whose young widow, Margaret, is now found to be a delicate condition, calling urgently, indeed, for the ministrations of one of her own sex. As to how Ambrose Sylvester died, Mrs. Janaway would truly have been a wise woman had she been able to say: "They said," she confided to Margaret, "that he was burned in his bed as a drunkard, and certainly the bed was burned, sleep, and a great part of the room, and—the body. And the Coroner's people who saw it said that the death had been accidental."

It was true, nevertheless, that Ambrose and his cousin, Jethro, had quarrelled violently just before; likewise true that one may be dead first and burned afterwards; and certainly the Sylvesters were men of violent temper; and it was a queer thing, moreover, that the servant girl, Betty Castle, should have disappeared just at that time, for all the world as though certain people had been afraid of what she knew!

Said Jethro Sylvester to Margaret when she appeared at the farm: "You must always know where your mistress is and what she is doing. She must not walk alone, nor speak with strangers, for she is not strong, and should therefore avoid anything that might excite her. Sometimes she is a little wild in manner, and then you need not attend too closely to what she says, for very likely she will talk nonsense."

From this, but don't let it disturb you. And, above everything, do not repeat outside anything of this nature which you may hear from her, for gossip is a thing which Mr. Sylvester will not brook, and would find it most difficult to forgive."

It is easy to believe that Margaret was not eager to do anything which would not be brooked by the ominous old man whom she had seen drinking and whose eyes blazed like live coals after his two bottles. When she was taken up to her new mistress she must have been surprised to hear Mrs. Sylvester singing behind the still unopened door:

And what is this that I see you bring?
Oh, what is the name of this wonderful thing?
Which I guess is a scarecrow, and hasten to say
That I have no use for it—take it away!

She declared through the door that she wasn't at home, but she opened it presently and then what sort of a mistress was it that Margaret saw? We read: "Mrs. Sylvester must have been still in her teens. Her face, indeed, was that of a child, so round was it, and so fair, with the dimples flitting about the corners of the rosy mouth, and the eyes narrowed by an innocent malice. Yet even in the moment when Margaret marked those facts and wondered at them, a cold hand seemed to grip her heart, as all at once she understood what Mrs. Janaway had meant when she had told her that the chief proof of a tragedy at the farm was to be found in the face of the bride-widow there. For those bright eyes held, as well as laughter, an abiding fear, of which their present mirth seemed a most pitiful defence.

But doubtless we have told enough; at any rate, we have told a good deal more than we had it in mind to tell when we set out. The reader may be sure that the story, though it is not long, contains all that we have omitted. He will hardly feel himself cheated or disappointed if he buys it and acquaints himself from its own pages with what Margaret and Mrs. Janaway and Mrs. Sylvester and Jethro and the others

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have to tell. It is an engaging story of mystery duty and the fact that it was up and were we to hear from the reader that so much as this had failed to satisfy him we should be greatly surprised.

Two Guides to Our Parks.

By a curious coincidence a subject of real interest that has not been treated, so far as we know, before is presented to us in two books that come to us at the same time from different publishers and that, nevertheless, supplement each other. There have been guidebooks for cities and for art collections, and there have been many general books on trees, but nobody had thought of leading the observer through a park and pointing out to him each tree and telling him exactly what it was. This Mr. Louis Harman Peet has done for what many people think is the most beautiful park in the Greater New York, in "Trees and Shrubs of Prospect Park" (American Printing House). Through every path of the park he leads the reader, telling him what he sees on the right hand and the left, and for him who wishes to walk by himself he provides ingenious little sectional maps, with each tree marked upon them. It is difficult to imagine a greater help to nature study for those who must learn it in a great city.

Central Park, on the other hand, is the starting point of Mr. H. E. Parkhurst's "Trees, Shrubs and Vines of the Northeastern United States" (Charles Scribner's Sons), and he devotes nearly half his volume to a description of what may be seen in it. As the title shows, he deals with his subject in a more scientific manner than Mr. Peet does with his, and the last part of his book is given up to technical descriptions of trees, vines and shrubs, native and foreign, that are found in Central Park. His book will be helpful, all the same, to all who care to find out what they see when they walk in the Park. It may not be unfair to compare the two books by guidebook standards: Mr. Peet's is a sort of tree Baedeker that tells you at once exactly what you have before you; Mr. Parkhurst's is a kind of "Hart's Walks" that tells much about many things, but leaves it rather to yourself to find out precisely where or what they are. Both are excellent and should increase the enjoyment of New Yorkers in their most beautiful treasures.

Another Story of the Eastern Shore.

Mr. William Henry Babcock's story, "Kent Fort Manor" (Henry T. Coates & Co., Philadelphia), is a tale of the Eastern Shore of Maryland in the time of the civil war. We know from a number of novels how stately and ceremonious the people of this fortunate tract of country were, and we consider it proper that a story about them should be couched in a literary style to correspond. Here is Roderick Claiborne riding forth to meet his kinsman, Walter Claiborne of Louisiana, in the swamp called the Devil's Tangle:

"Having once waved adieu, Roderick rode on without turning again—a tall, broad-shouldered figure, easy in the saddle, riding the great iron gray as though it and he were one. His great, knotted, supple hand held without grasping. His strong, bold, slightly preponderant fore-

head, gray eyes, clear, keen, impenetrable, and the mask of abundant gray-brown beard below, leaving only little corner areas of skin quite visible, made up a countenance not readily to be passed by."

On the way he met another kinsman, Capt. Ithaca Claiborne of the Federal Army, who was accompanied by Lieut. Peter Tompkins, a rather weak and ineffectual person. Capt. Ithaca was out after the same Walter Claiborne that Headlong Roderick, as he was called, was riding to meet. Walter served the Confederacy in a diplomatic capacity in London, and was now hiding in the Devil's Tangle, waiting to get into Richmond. The broad and formidable Roderick blocked Capt. Ithaca's road. We read of the Northern Claiborne: "There could not be a reader than. All the thirty years of his life his wits had been like a knife blade, turning point uppermost in time for every blow. For a moment he thought of throwing himself on the man before him and extorting the secret of Walter's hiding place. But he could not quite count on Tompkins, and this was an iron-limbed centaur known to be most ready with his weapons. He held to words instead."

"When you have finished your inspection you will kindly permit us to pass along the public road?"

The Southern Claiborne at once admitted and reprehended this kinsman on the other side. "Roderick noted the stylish upward inflection, the affected smile, the oblique mock-deferential carriage of the strong, broad-browed, black-trimmed and thoroughly hostile face. Here were length of limb and uniqueness of personality quite equal to his own; a trenchant eye, too—quite evidently a tenacious, enterprising and extremely unforgetting man."

There is much of this careful and rather altitudinous manner in the story. The passages of pure humor are as deliberate and rounded as the rest. Still, a distinctly clever story, and we believe there are plenty who will not only have patience with it, but will like it into the bargain.

Some Irish Fairy Tales.

The strange adventures of a daring Tipperary man among the fairies of Sleiv-na-moan are entertainingly set forth by Hermine Templeton in "Dartly O'Gill and the Good People" (McClure, Phillips & Co.).

The half dozen stories are told in the rich and racy language of Mr. Jerry Murtagh, a reliable car-driver who had the further distinction of being first cousin to Dartly O'Gill's mother. Sleiv-na-moan is a big hill in Tipperary and in its hollow heart is the abode of the Good People and of old Brian Connors, their jovial and kindly king. We think that any reader will thoroughly enjoy the account of Dartly's visit to Brian Connors's court and the wonderful things the worthy man saw there. Nor will he fail, unless he be a very serious reader indeed, to enjoy the encounter between Dartly and the Leprechaun, who, as all the world knows, is the fairy cobbler and is possessed of certain strange and wondrous powers. One of the best things in a book that is interesting throughout is the story of how the fairies came to Ireland.

Continued on Eighth Page.

PUBLICATIONS.

PUBLICATIONS.

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